

What are the IEB Advanced Programme courses?

The Advanced Programmes provide talented learners from both state and independent schools with an opportunity to delve deeper into a discipline that interests and excites them and an opportunity to pit their intellectual capacity against an examination in which they are challenged to stretch themselves.

The IEB is a Proudly South African organisation and our commitment is to building a national education system that as a nation, we can be proud of. The IEB's intention in developing the Advanced Programmes in English, Mathematics and Afrikaans is to keep the top learners in South Africa abreast of global standards in key disciplines and to provide all learners across the country with the opportunity to test themselves at the highest level.

There is a dangerous misconception that suggests that academic pursuit should only be for the purposes of university entrance or the achievement of very high scores in 'examinations that count'. Peter Stanford, a well-known English journalist and editor, calls this 'the orthodoxy that examination success maketh the man' and the 'hollow me, me, me mantra of modern society'.

The IEB introduced the Advanced Programmes to provide talented learners from both state and IEB schools with an opportunity to delve deeper into a discipline that interests and excites them, an opportunity to pit their intellectual capacity against an examination in which they are challenged to stretch themselves. Studying simply for the joy of it and not because it is a necessary requirement develops rounded students who appreciate the pursuit of knowledge as a vehicle through which to become an educated and discerning citizen, rather than simply the acquisition of knowledge only for its material value.

It is important to note however that there is also material value in the AP programmes as the following observation from a past pupil currently studying engineering illustrates: *"AP Maths gave me and others a solid foundation. We were miles above the rest and maths was a breeze. Engineering maths first semester of your first year is the second most failed course at Stellenbosch ... AP Maths was the answer."*

In addition to their intellectual value, the Advanced Programmes do provide students who may wish to study at an institution abroad, with courses that have been benchmarked by a credible international organisation, i.e. UK NARIC, as being equivalent in demand to A-level programmes. Their rigorous review included not only the curriculum and assessment requirements and the examination papers but also actual marked scripts of candidates who wrote the examination.

The IEB is committed to providing access to these uniquely South African but globally challenging assessments to all talented South African learners, be they from IEB or state schools. Hence we have criteria whereby the IEB assists learners who might be excluded from these assessments on the grounds of cost, to participate.